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14. ABSTRACT During foreign humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (FHA/DR) operations, the Department of Defense (DOD) occasionally supports the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in USAID's role as lead federal agency for FHA/DR. Despite being only one of potentially many supporting U.S. government (USG) agencies, DOD components can be put in the challenging position of prioritizing the airlift cargo for other USG agencies supporting USAID's lead. This paper argues that when DOD assets are to be used to airlift cargo for interagency partners during FHA/DR operations, USAID should set the transportation priorities for the interagency cargo based on USG objectives, the USAID's concept of operations and the situation; the joint force commander should then be responsible for integrating the interagency airlift priorities into the overall airlift priorities communicated to U.S. Transportation Command for actual movement.					
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**WHO SHOULD SET AIRLIFT PRIORITIES DURING FOREIGN HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE/DISASTER RELIEF (FHA/DR) OPERATIONS AND ON WHAT
BASIS?**

by

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the
requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

Signature: //signed, snw, 24 Nov 2010//

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Abstract

Who Should Set Airlift Priorities during Foreign Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief Operations and on What Basis? During foreign humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (FHA/DR) operations, the Department of Defense (DOD) occasionally supports the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in USAID's role as lead federal agency for FHA/DR. Despite being only one of potentially many supporting U.S. government (USG) agencies, DOD components can be put in the challenging position of prioritizing the airlift cargo for other USG agencies supporting USAID's lead. This paper argues that when DOD assets are to be used to airlift cargo for interagency partners during FHA/DR operations, USAID should set the transportation priorities for the interagency cargo based on USG objectives, the USAID's concept of operations and the situation; the joint force commander should then be responsible for integrating the interagency airlift priorities into the overall airlift priorities communicated to U.S. Transportation Command for actual movement.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. government (USG) foreign humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (FHA/DR) effort supporting the Government of Haiti (GOH) kicked off very shortly after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Port au Prince at 1653 local on 12 January 2010.¹ U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) was the geographic combatant command (GCC) overseeing military participation in the effort, named Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE (OUR), and Joint Task Force (JTF) Haiti provided operational control of the military's participation in the USG's support to GOH. President Obama directed a "swift, coordinated and aggressive effort" that included many organizations in the USG, and he designated U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as the lead federal agency (LFA) to coordinate the USG effort.² Throughout the response, SOUTHCOM was asked to coordinate Department of Defense (DOD) airlift to carry cargo for USG interagency partners. The task of prioritizing this cargo was executed by SOUTHCOM's Deployment and Distribution Operations Center (SDDOC).³ This was a challenge because DOD was not the LFA and SDDOC, in its role as a component of a supporting agency in USG's effort, was tasked with prioritizing the cargo of other supporting USG agencies—a task typically executed by the supported commander or his staff during military operations.⁴

This paper will address that challenge and suggest a way to overcome it. It will describe the military airlift prioritization process, the DOD's role in FHA/DR operations and what made prioritization of USG cargo challenging during execution of OUR. Through the discussion, it will demonstrate that when DOD assets are to be used to airlift cargo for interagency partners during FHA/DR operations, USAID should set the transportation priorities for the interagency cargo based on USG objectives, the USAID's concept of

operations and the situation; the joint force commander should then be responsible for integrating the interagency airlift priorities into the overall airlift priorities communicated to U.S. Transportation Command (USTC) for the actual movement.

DISCUSSION

How the DOD Prioritizes Airlift

Before delving into who should prioritize airlift on DOD assets during operations in which DOD is not the LFA, one should first understand the simpler case—how DOD prioritizes its own cargo airlifted on its own assets. Though seemingly simple, the sheer size of the DOD and number of competing tasks and missions call for a very disciplined and controlled process. The underlying principle is quite clear: Ensure airlift is prioritized for commanders to meet their assigned objectives in the dynamic environment within which they are operating.

The Joint Staff has established a standing “DOD Transportation Movement Priority System”⁵ that is summarized in Table I. It is meant to define “the relative criticality of cargo and passenger movement requirements to prioritize DOD common-user airlift and sealift resources,”⁶ and it states that “lift managers should apply available airlift and sealift resources to the highest priority category first” when requirements exceed lift capability.⁷ These priorities are expressed in a number, letter, number format from 1A1 (Presidential-directed missions) to 4B3 (static display for public and military events) with lowest numbers/alphabetically first letters indicating higher priority. This prioritization system is necessary to enable USTC to determine which GCC’s requirements to support when demand exceeds capability. When the Joint Staff releases warning and execution orders, it will typically specify the priority for the operation.

Priority 1A	1A1	Presidential-directed missions including support to the National Airborne Operations Center (NAOC) when operating in direct support of the President.
	1A2	U.S. forces and other forces or activities in combat designated by the Chairman in accordance with applicable Secretary of Defense Guidance.
	1A3	Programs approved by the President for top national priority
Priority 1B	1B1	Missions specially directed by the Secretary of Defense—urgent contingency deployments, redeployment of forces conducting real-world operations in support of CONPLANS for special operations, routine law enforcement deployment missions, NAOC missions not in direct support of the President, validated contingency missions, urgent or priority aeromedical evacuation, deployment of special operations forces for real-world counterdrug and joint combined exchange training missions.
	1B2	Units, projects, or plans specially approved fore implementation by the Secretary of Defense—intended for deployment or rotation of forces supporting contingency operations of an enduring nature.
	1B3	All contingency redeployments and redeployment of special operations forces from real-world counterdrug and Joint, Combined Exchange Training missions.
Priority 2A	2A1	U.S. and/or foreign forces or activities deploying or positioned and maintained in a state of readiness for immediate combat, combat support, or combat service support missions.
	2A2	Industrial production activities engaged in repair, modification, or manufacture of primary weapons, equipment, and supplies to prevent an impending work stoppage or to re-institute production in the event a work stoppage has already occurred.
Priority 2B	2B1	Requirements for CJCS-sponsored exercises (under the CJCS Exercise Program).
	2B2	Requirements for combatant commander-sponsored exercises (under the CJCS Exercise Program).
Priority 3A	3A1	Readiness or evaluation tests when airlift is required in support of the unit inspection or evaluation tests.
	3A2	U.S. and/or foreign forces or activities that are maintained in a state of readiness to deploy for combat and other activities essential to combat forces.
Priority 3B	3B1	Joint airborne/air transportability training (JA/ATT) when airborne operations or air mobility support is integral to combat readiness.
	3B2	JA/ATT involving combat support training or counterdrug training missions.
	3B3	JA/ATT involving Service schools requiring airborne, airdrop, or air transportability training as part of the program of instruction.
	3B4	JA/ATT involving airdrop and/or air transportability or aircraft certification of new or modified equipment.
Priority 4A	4A1	U.S. and/or foreign forces or activities tasked for employment in support of approved war plans and support activities essential to such forces.
	4A2	Static loading exercises for those units specifically tasked to perform air transportability missions.
Priority 4B	4B1	Other U.S. and/or foreign forces or activities.
	4B2	Other non-DOD activities that cannot be accommodated by commercial airlift.
	4B3	Static display for public and military events.

Table I -- DOD Transportation Movement Priorities (CJCS Instruction 4120.02B, 1 June 2009)

While the DOD Transportation Movement Priority System is useful for a GCC to compete with other GCCs for airlift, the categories need further refinement to establish relative priorities for airlift allocated to the GCC—both at inter-theater and intra-theater levels. Within the DOD priorities, USTC will actually assign strategic airlift assets based on priorities communicated by the GCC. During steady state operations, some of the GCCs have standing prioritization schemes for all airlift (see Table II for U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM))⁸ and some have prioritization schemes for intra-theater airlift (see Table III for U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)).⁹ CENTCOM also has a formalized system to increase the priority of sustainment cargo moved by USTC through the use of its “purple sheet” system.¹⁰ This enables CENTCOM to rapidly alter priorities for specific cargo based on developments in the operational environment.

The standing mechanisms that establish and communicate airlift priorities work almost automatically during peacetime steady-state operations. During contingencies like large-scale FHA/DR operations, the process is more dynamic, and the most difficult aspect is matching airlift priorities to operations. The key is aligning airlift priority with the concept of operations designed to realize the commander’s objectives. In U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and CENTCOM, the combatant commanders retain the authority to set airlift priorities, but EUCOM does provide the option for JTF commanders to set airlift priorities.¹¹ In AFRICOM, the combatant commander retains the authority to reset airlift priorities and requires the AFRICOM DDOC to coordinate with the Future Operations Division to de-conflict competing requirements.¹² In SOUTHCOM, SDDOC serves as the single point of contact for prioritizing movements, but the SOUTHCOM Operations Directorate (SCJ3) resolves conflicts in priority should they occur.¹³

Africa Command Priority	JCS Priority	Description of Movement
1	1A	Congressional Delegations; Presidential Direction & Dept of State/DOD secretariat approved/directed movements
2	1A	Combat and combat support operational requirements, aeromedical evacuations and emergency immediate medical shipments
3	1B	Human remains
4	1B	Emergency ammunition, emergency medical supplies and combat sustainment
5	1B	Humanitarian assistance and civil-military operations
6	1B	Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), Air Mobility Command (AMC) Mission Impaired Capability Awaiting Parts (MICAP), or aircraft Maintenance Recovery Team when required with AMC MICAP
7	1B	Mail, unit deployment/redeployment in support of JCS operations
8		MICAP, supply couriers (classified/financial), MRT and military working dogs
9	1B	Validated minimum-frequency contingency channels
10	2B	Unit moves (including JCS exercises and theater security cooperation missions)
11	3A	Sustainment cargo (DOD, U.S. Embassy, other agency and approved partner nation) to include back log (fresh fruits and vegetables take precedence in this category).
12		Intra-theater letter of instruction designated distinguished visitors and morale, welfare and recreation entertainment.
13		O-7 / O-6 and civilian equivalent space blocking
14		Routine enemy prisoners of war, detainees and escort
15	3B	Individual passengers and U.S. Embassy / Office of Security Cooperation trainers, inspectors, assessment teams and investigative agencies
16	3B	Public Affairs
17	3B	Airdrop and combat support training and exercises
18	4B	Commercial contract support

Table II -- U.S. Africa Command Airlift Priority Guidance (AFRICOM Manual 4500.03, 10 July 2009)

In sum, the DOD has a very detailed cargo prioritization system scaled to handle the scope of its movement requirements and that aligns airlift priorities with the commander's objectives, concept of operations (typically executed by the commander's operations division/directorate) and the state of the operating environment. Before returning to the issue of airlift prioritization in FHA/DR, it is essential to understand the legal authority, strategic guidance, responsibilities and capabilities of the major USG agencies participating in FHA/DR operations.

Priority	Description
1	Troops in contact, aeromedical evacuations, emergency immediate medical shipments, and special operations forces en route to engagement
2	Congressional Delegations; Presidential Direction (US Embassy Iraq/US Embassy Afghanistan) & Dept of State/DOD secretariat approved/directed movements, and missions directed by CDRUSCENTCOM
3	Time sensitive/mission critical; emergency ammunition in black status at ammunition supply point, emergency medical supplies
4	Coalition human remains
5	CENTCOM intra-theater letter of instruction designated DVs (Cat A and B only)
6	MRTs, medical attendants returning to CENTCOM area of responsibility and MICAP
7	Mail, unit deployments and redeployments, intra-theater medical personnel taskings, US federal agencies, passengers in PCS status, sustainment ammunition, combat sustainment
8	CENTCOM intra-theater LOI designated DVs (Cat C and D only) and CENTCOM morale, welfare and recreation entertainment tours
9	Routine enemy prisoner of war, detainee and escort movement
10	Couriers and military working dogs
11	All other sustainment cargo
12	Individual passengers and Office of Security Cooperation trainers, inspectors, assessment teams and investigative agencies
13	Humanitarian assistance and combat munitions order
14	CENTCOM-sponsored exercises, contract support and Non-CENTCOM-sponsored exercises

Table III -- CENTCOM Intra-Theater Request System Priorities (CENTCOM CCJ4 Msg 241319Z Feb 10)

USG FHA/DR Response—Strategic Guidance, Responsibilities and Capabilities

The legal basis for USG FHA/DR response is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) and its amendments. In the FAA, Congress lays out the objectives of USG FHA/DR operations by stating the importance of “prompt United States assistance to alleviate human suffering caused by natural and manmade disasters” and affirming “the willingness of the United States to provide assistance for the relief and rehabilitation of people and countries affected by such disasters.”¹⁴ Furthermore, the FAA attempts to synchronize efforts of the USG interagency by authorizing the U.S. President to “appoint a Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance whose responsibility shall be to promote maximum effectiveness and coordination in responses to foreign disasters by United States agencies and between the United States and other donors.”¹⁵ The Office of U.S.

Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) within USAID has been assigned the role of coordinating USG responses to foreign disasters, and its enduring legal justification for doing so is in the FAA.¹⁶ This means that USAID/OFDA serves as the LFA for almost all FHA/DR operations.¹⁷

USAID/OFDA works directly with the Chiefs of Mission (COMs) and mission staffs for disaster-affected nations to provide necessary relief. USAID/OFDA's overriding mission is to "prevent or minimize loss of life, alleviate human suffering, and reduce damage to economic assets in disaster-affected countries."¹⁸ USAID/OFDA only gets involved in FHA/DR operations when requested by the COM and three criteria are met. First, the disaster "must be of such magnitude that it is beyond the host country's ability to respond adequately."¹⁹ Second, the affected nation must "have requested or will accept USG assistance."²⁰ Third, "it is in the interest of the USG to provide assistance."²¹ Based on reports and assessments by the COM's Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO), USAID/OFDA will scale its response based on the complexity and scope of the disaster, USAID presence in the affected area, other forms of support responding to the disaster, and the support requested by the disaster-stricken nation. The response could range from a release of funds to be managed by the MDRO to the deployment of a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to assess and manage USG response in the disaster area.

When USAID/OFDA DARTs are deployed to a disaster area, they deploy to support the COM in managing the USG response to the disaster.²² DARTs are composed of trained and qualified disaster specialists drawn from within USAID and other USG agencies, and they are tailored to the type of disaster encountered. During assessment and FHA/DR operation management, DARTs attempt to apply a "protection mindset," ensuring assistance

does no harm, “e.g., does not aggravate local tensions, expose target populations to greater danger, or inadvertently further empower those who are responsible for conflict or abuse.”²³

In other words, the DART and all of USAID/OFDA’s work attempts to provide protection for the affected population. The DART then endeavors to apply the following priorities: 1) Ensure there is an organizational framework integrating the host nation, United Nations relief organizations, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs); and 2) Meet the needs of the affected population—water, food, immunization for measles, health care, emergency shelter and sanitation (in order of importance). Furthermore, all of USAID/OFDA’s assistance works to promote self-sufficiency in the affected population from the start.²⁴ In sum, USAID/OFDA operates with a team of FHA/DR professionals with a great deal of experience, and they come with effective, time-tested FHA/DR principles to establish objectives, strategies and priorities to support the COM in coordinating the USG efforts in the disaster-affected country to meet USG objectives.

Before describing how the DOD gets involved in FHA/DR, it is important to note what USAID/OFDA actually does to support FHA/DR operations. First, USAID/OFDA brings a robust assessment capability, assessing both the nature and extent of the disaster and the capabilities and operating procedures of the other organizations responding to the disaster. Assessment is the key, because USAID/OFDA incorporates a “pull” strategy to efficiently and effectively bring the right materials and capabilities at the right time.²⁵ If needed, USAID/OFDA can pull basic relief supplies (food, blankets and shelters) from its three different warehouses around the globe.²⁶ More importantly, however, USAID/OFDA strategically spends money to achieve USG objectives by addressing the priorities stated

above. It coordinates and funds UN relief organizations, NGOs, IOs, and other USG agencies (including DOD) to perform the activities required to most effectively respond to the disaster. It also contracts most of its logistical support, and even when it does resort to using DOD transportation assets, it may reimburse the DOD. However, use of the DOD is relatively rare. The DOD is only significantly involved in about five percent of the 70 to 80 FHA/DR operations USAID/OFDA participates in each year.²⁷

Federal law governs foreign disaster assistance for the DOD.²⁸ This guidance is further defined by executive order²⁹ and a DOD directive.³⁰ The executive order directs the DOD to provide disaster assistance only at the direction of the President, or with the concurrence of the Secretary of State (SECSTATE), or in emergency situations to save lives when there is insufficient time to obtain SECSTATE concurrence.³¹ Additionally, according to DOD directive, “subject to overriding military mission requirements,” DOD will participate in foreign disaster relief after the Department of State (DOS) requests DOD assistance. Also, the DOD directive allows combatant commanders to take action “at the immediate scene of a foreign disaster...when time is of the essence and when humanitarian considerations make it advisable to do so.”³² Finally, according to executive order, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) is required to consult with the Administrator of USAID in the Administrator’s capacity as the President’s Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance.³³

When DOD is tasked to support FHA/DR operations, it brings many unique and robust capabilities. The capabilities employed in FHA/DR are typically sustainment and security related, but the DOD also has the capability to provide robust command, control and communications in austere environments. However, because the chain of command runs

from the fielded forces up through SECDEF to the President, DOD forces are never under the control of the LFA. SECDEF and subordinate commanders can direct those forces to support the LFA, but they will never be under the direct control of the LFA. USG unity of effort in FHA/DR operations depends on the cooperation and coordination between all involved USG agencies and departments.

USG Response to the Earthquake in Haiti—Atypical FHA/DR

In many ways, the USG response to the earthquake in Haiti was different than typical FHA/DR operations, and those differences significantly stressed USAID/OFDA’s capability to manage, coordinate, and “promote maximum effectiveness”³⁴ of the entire USG response. USG response to the earthquake can best be characterized as a whole-of-government endeavor. On the day after the earthquake, President Obama told the press that he had “made it clear [to Cabinet officials and top agency heads] that Haiti must be top priority for their departments and agencies right now.”³⁵ As expected, the USAID Administrator was designated as the USG’s unified disaster coordinator. Throughout the event, twenty-one USG agencies participated in the FHA/DR operation and they participated much as they would for a domestic disaster response—they proactively pushed capabilities, resources and personnel into Haiti.³⁶ This philosophy is entirely different than USAID/OFDA’s “pull” concept for managing FHA/DR operations. Due to the infrastructure of Haiti, the capability of GOH and both the DART’s operating procedures and limited size; the “push” caused friction among the agencies participating.

Before the earthquake, Haiti was a country with many challenges; after the earthquake, it was a country truly in need. Haiti was the poorest country per capita in the western hemisphere.³⁷ It had virtually no military and at the time of the earthquake, United

Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was maintaining order and had been doing so since 2004.³⁸ The small country had one international airport and one international seaport. Both were decimated by the earthquake. Fourteen of sixteen GOH ministry buildings collapsed in the earthquake, killing many government officials.³⁹ Additionally, MINUSTAH senior leaders were among the 230,000 people killed during the earthquake.⁴⁰ Haiti was a country in need of much help.

In the days immediately following the earthquake, the COM to Haiti, Ambassador Merten, worked with his staff to first, recover as victims of the earthquake; second, to coordinate the evacuation of 16,000 Americans, the largest evacuation of U.S. citizens since World War II; third, oversee the USG effort to support the GOH's recovery operation; and fourth, process the many requests for Haitian visas into the U.S.⁴¹ The COM was also forced to support the influx of other USG agencies pushing personnel and resources into Haiti to support the recovery—many uninvited and unprepared in terms of sustainment and equipment to operate in the austere conditions of Haiti following the earthquake.⁴²

Both USAID/OFDA and DOD responded quickly. USAID/OFDA sent a DART with 25 personnel to assess the situation and then “pull” and organize USG, NGO, PVO and IO resources as necessary.⁴³ DOD worked to open the airfield 28 hours after the earthquake and provided air traffic control and airfield management until the Haitians could take over.⁴⁴ Due to the limited size and capabilities of the airfield, DOD managed slot times for aircraft inbound to the international airport; however, USAID, in consultation with United Nations representatives and international partners determined slot priorities for all international air traffic inbound to Port au Prince.⁴⁵ The seaport was not opened until ten days after the earthquake, so airlift was critical for most organizations to deliver their cargo and

personnel.⁴⁶ At the peak, the airport supported 168 flights per day, an 840% increase in operations over the steady state prior to the earthquake.⁴⁷ By 14 January, two days after the earthquake, SOUTHCOM activated JTF Haiti, and it reached initial operating capability on the ground near the U.S. Embassy in Haiti by 15 January. By 19 January, the JTF headquarters was manned with 78 personnel and by 25 January, its number grew to 355.⁴⁸ Within five days of the earthquake, there were almost 5,000 uniformed members in the operating area and within a week that number grew to almost 14,000. The number of U.S. military personnel exceeded 22,000 at its zenith.⁴⁹

Lieutenant General Keen, the SOUTHCOM Deputy Commander and also the Commander of JTF-Haiti made clear the role of JTF Haiti was to support the FHA/DR operations. The mission statement for OUR was to “synchronize DOD support to USAID/OFDA and United Nations FHA/DR efforts to mitigate human suffering and accelerate recovery in Haiti.”⁵⁰ Two of the key tasks were maintaining security and enabling the mobility for USG and other FHA/DR delivering elements.⁵¹ General Keen consulted with the COM and DART leader daily, and the JTF Haiti staff worked with the embassy staff and DART as well.

The DART was stretched thin. In addition to assessing the damage and needs of the Haitians, it was working with the United Nations and international community to bring the highest priority support through the single operating airport. The DART eventually grew to include 38 staff members plus another 506 personnel populating urban search and rescue teams to find survivors.⁵² It requested additional support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Department Health and Human Services to assist in finding and caring for survivors as well as conducting mortuary affairs.⁵³ On day three, its

priorities were security, commodities (water), transportation/logistics, medical/health, fuel, shelter, communications and interagency coordination⁵⁴ (deployment of all mobilized search and rescue teams was complete by day three).⁵⁵ The DART also had to work with well-meaning, but ill-prepared personnel from other USG agencies whom the DART did not request—support pushed into Haiti and not pulled.⁵⁶ Finally, the DART was also fielding myriad inquiries from Washington.⁵⁷ In sum, the DART was task saturated, and managing the interagency effort being pushed to Haiti—and not requested by the DART—was last on its list of priorities.

Also, the DART lacked one tool that would have enhanced its ability to manage the USG effort—an information management tool into which all agencies could peer to see what was being provided by the international disaster relief effort and what was needed from the USG. SOUTHCOM attempted to adapt U.S. Pacific Command’s unclassified web-based collaborative tool, the All Partners Access Network (APAN), but the tool was not embraced by all participating USG agencies, and it was not sufficiently compatible with the information management tools used by the United Nations.⁵⁸

The focus of the DART had much to do with prioritization of airlift by SDDOC. Based on the JTF’s interaction with the DART and the embassy staff, the JTF communicated transportation priorities to the SOUTHCOM SCJ3 in broad categories.⁵⁹ These priorities included not only the focus of the DART, but also deployment and sustainment of material to support the large DOD presence and its operations (security, engineering and delivery of humanitarian assistance goods). The SCJ3 then passed those priorities to SDDOC, and SDDOC worked with USTC to schedule flights that would move cargo in accordance with the broad priorities.⁶⁰ Additionally, the SDDOC received requests for movement of cargo

and personnel to Haiti from other USG agencies and NGOs. These requests often came through the SOUTHCOM Partnering Directorate (SCJ9). SCJ9 was built to enable SOUTHCOM to coordinate and collaborate with USG agencies. Requests from non-USG actors for DOD airlift (donated items and relief commodities) were channeled from SCJ9 to the USAID/OFDA Advisor at SOUTHCOM in order to ensure that USAID/OFDA supported movement of the cargo as USG priority.⁶¹ Once the requests were made and funding/reimbursement method secured, SDDOC worked with USTC to schedule flights.⁶² Due to USTC capacity and the proximity of Haiti, USTC was able to support all flight requests by SDDOC to carry USG agency cargo;⁶³ however, SDDOC and SCJ3 would have been challenged to choose between requirements of USG agencies if USTC's capacity was not sufficient. SDDOC's understanding of USAID/OFDA's priorities was not detailed enough to guide the potential choice between competing requirements of USG agencies. SOUTHCOM would have either had to ask USAID/OFDA or come up with its own heuristic to prioritize the potentially competing requirements of USG agencies.

Overcoming the Challenge of Airlift Prioritization for Other USG Agencies

So, who should set the airlift priorities during FHA/DR operations when DOD assets carry interagency cargo? When DOD is not involved in FHA/DR—95% of all FHA/DR operations—USAID/OFDA handles the operations, to include airlift prioritization, quite effectively. USAID/OFDA pulls resources and capabilities it needs to integrate into the international community's larger FHA/DR efforts, and it is uniquely qualified to do so in the USG. Furthermore, when DOD is involved in FHA/DR operations, SECDEF must consult with the USAID Administrator; however, there is no mechanism to compel SECDEF to direct DOD in accordance with guidance from the USAID Administrator.⁶⁴ With that stated,

in two recent large-scale, successful FHA/DR operations—those following the earthquake in Haiti and the Tsunami off the coast of Indonesia 2004—the military commanders communicated that military activities were in support of USAID/OFDA.⁶⁵ This is important to the success of DOD-supported FHA/DR operations because DOD was best qualified to prioritize its cargo for sustaining its personnel and to equip the forces for its tasks in supporting FHA/DR operations. Consequently, commanders of FHA/DR operations need the flexibility to fold the USAID/OFDA priorities for non-DOD airlift into the DOD’s overall airlift prioritization scheme. With clear support from the joint force commanders, this overall prioritization scheme best supports USG unity of effort. Additionally, with integrated priorities set, the DOD transportation processes described above can move the cargo to support FHA/DR operations.

What should be the basis for prioritization of interagency cargo airlifted on DOD assets? The same principles described above for prioritizing military airlift. Prioritization should be based on USG objectives, USAID/OFDA’s concept of operations to achieve those objectives, and the situation. Pursuit of common objectives is fundamental to achieving unity of effort.⁶⁶ The common concept of operations is what synchronizes the efforts of all participating USG agencies to achieve those objectives. Additionally, support plans, which includes airlift prioritization, are designed to enable activities in accordance with the concept of operations developed by LFA—USAID/OFDA.⁶⁷ Finally, the situation drives activities according to the concept of operations or alterations to the concept of operations and consequently the activities associated with those changes.

POSSIBLE COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

One might argue USAID/OFDA should not be responsible for prioritizing airlift for USG agencies because it does not have sufficient management capability. Following the earthquake, the DART in Haiti was task saturated and not large enough to take on the role of prioritizing airlift cargo for other USG agencies. However, that claim would not be entirely accurate. The DART was able to prioritize what it considered necessary—the support that it pulled from the USG and other organizations. What the DART and the rest of USAID/OFDA did not have was the authority to put the whole-of-government response on pause so it could assess the FHA/DR requirements presented by the environment, compare those requirements to what the United Nations and international community was planning to meet, and then distill the remaining requirements to be met through USG efforts. Instead, the US whole-of-government response deviated from USAID/OFDA's typical FHA/DR model and followed a domestic disaster response scheme.⁶⁸ Those USG personnel and resources pushed into Haiti that were not requested by USAID/OFDA overwhelmed the limited infrastructure in Haiti and GOH emergency response capabilities.⁶⁹ In sum, USG's response to the Haiti earthquake was an aberration in terms of FHA/DR. USAID/OFDA responds to about 70 to 80 disasters a year, many requiring other USG agency support, and USAID/OFDA has proven to be quite effective.⁷⁰

Another counterargument might be USAID/OFDA should not prioritize other USG agency cargo, but the COM in the country receiving USG support should do so instead. The COM is the U.S. President's representative in the country and tasked with overseeing all USG operations within the country.⁷¹ This would keep lines of authority clear and unambiguous, and in theory it would enable the COM to drive USG unity of effort. The

problems with this argument are threefold. First, the COM's staff does not have the expertise. The MDRO duty is often an additional duty, and the MDRO would not have the expertise of someone in USAID/OFDA unless they were part of the USAID mission in country. Second, if a disaster was extensive enough to require USG support beyond what USAID/OFDA could provide, a DART would be deployed to provide the necessary expertise and management structure to support the COM and the Administrator of USAID as the President's Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance.⁷² Third, during a large-scale FHA/DR operation, it is highly likely that the COM would have to focus on his or her primary duty—evacuating American citizens. As stated above, 16,000 Americans were evacuated from Haiti in the days and weeks following the earthquake.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of the response to the earthquake in Haiti lends itself to two recommendations that may have alleviated SDDOC's challenge of prioritizing USG interagency cargo. The first is a robust information management tool that could communicate FHA/DR capability requirements in real time and that all participating USG agencies could access and use with competence.⁷³ With such a tool, USG agencies could offer capabilities for the DART to pull as required. In pulling the capabilities, the DART could identify priorities and the dates the capabilities were required. Furthermore, the DART could specify the amount of organic sustainment necessary for the capabilities to operate in the disaster-stricken nation. This would provide enough information for SDDOC to integrate USAID/OFDA's priorities for USG cargo with the priorities of DOD cargo. SOUTHCOM attempted to stand up this capability with APAN, but it was not used across USG. APAN was not designed to readily integrate with the United Nations' cluster response system for

FHA/DR.⁷⁴ As the USG typically supports the United Nations in FHA/DR, it is important to have an information management tool that integrates with the United Nation's FHA/DR architecture.

Another recommendation would be to establish a trained DART augmentation cadre to increase USAID/OFDA DARTs' capabilities to manage whole-of-government efforts during extremely large-scale FHA/DR operations.⁷⁵ The DART in Haiti was task saturated due to the magnitude of the disaster and the size of the proactive USG response. A cadre of personnel from other USG agencies, including DOD, could have been used to augment the DART and improve communication across USG. To be effective, the personnel identified to augment DARTs would need to receive training from USAID/OFDA routinely well before employment in disaster response.

CONCLUSION

When DOD assets are to be used to airlift cargo for interagency partners during FHA/DR operations, USAID should set transportation priorities for interagency cargo. USAID/OFDA is best qualified to assess the scope of FHA/DR operations and pull USG agency resources in the right priority to respond effectively. DOD is not well placed to prioritize the airlift cargo for USG interagency partners. DOD should, however, set the airlift priorities for its own cargo based on its expertise in equipping and sustaining its forces to meet the joint force commander's objectives. As the responsible commander for the operation, the joint force commander should then fold USAID/OFDA's priorities for USG interagency cargo into the joint force transportation priorities to pass to USTC for execution. Priorities for the USG interagency cargo should be based on USG objectives, USAID's concept of operations, and the situation.

NOTES

1. USJFCOM JCOA, *USSOUTHCOM and JTF-Haiti...Some Challenges and Considerations in Forming a Joint Task Force*, 2.
2. USJFCOM JCOA, “Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE Haiti Earthquake Response,” 24.
3. U.S. Southern Command Policy Memorandum 05-05.
4. U.S. Joint Staff, JDEIS.
5. U.S. Office of the CJCS, CJCSI 4120.02B, Enclosure A.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. U.S. Africa Command, ACM 4500.03, A-5 Table 2.
9. U.S. Central Command, USCENTCOM ITARS Airlift Priority Update.
10. U.S. Central Command, *CENTCOM Intra-theater LOI*, 52.
11. U.S. European Command, Directive 64-1, 14 and 22, and U.S. Central Command, Regulation 525-1, 7-E-2.
12. U.S. Africa Command, ACM 4500.03, A-5.
13. U.S. Southern Command Policy Memorandum 05-05.
14. *Foreign Assistance Act*, Sec. 491.
15. Ibid., Sec 493.
16. U.S. Office of the Secretary of State Msg. 00124728.
17. This is almost exclusively the case in pure FHA/DR operations; the choice for LFA is less clear in complex contingencies in which FHA/DR is only a subset of a larger operation.
18. U.S. Office of the Secretary of State, Msg. 00124728.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. USAID/OFDA, *Field Operations Guide*, II-3.
23. Ibid., III-3.
24. Ibid., III-7 and 8.
25. Guha-Sapir, et al, “Haiti Earthquake Interagency Lessons Learned,” 51.
26. USAID/OFDA, *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009*, 13.
27. Wilhelm, “USAID and DOD Roles in Foreign Disaster Response,” 32, and Kate LeGates (OFDA Advisor, SOUTHCOM SCJ9), interview by author, 19 October 2010.
28. *U.S. Code*, Title 10, Section 404.
29. U.S. President, Executive Order 12966.
30. U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, DOD Directive 5100.46, entire document.
31. U.S. President, Executive Order 12966.
32. U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, DOD Directive 5100.46, 3.
33. U.S. President, Executive Order 12966.
34. *Foreign Assistance Act*, Sec. 491.
35. Garamone, “Obama Makes Haiti Response a Top Priority.”
36. Guha-Sapir, et al, “Report on an Independent Review of the USG Response to the Haiti Earthquake: Findings and Recommendations,” 26. The only information cited in this draft document is the number of agencies that participated in the USG response.
37. Rencoret, et al, “Haiti Earthquake Response Context Analysis,” 8.
38. United Nations, “MINUSTAH Mandate.”
39. USJFCOM JCOA, *USSOUTHCOM and JTF-Haiti...Some Challenges and Considerations in Forming a Joint Task Force*, 2.
40. Ibid.
41. Guha-Sapir, et al, “Haiti Earthquake Interagency Lessons Learned,” 7.
42. Ibid., 51.
43. USJFCOM JCOA, “Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE Haiti Earthquake Response,” 38.
44. U.S. Southern Command, “Narrative History of Operation Unified Response.”
45. USJFCOM JCOA, “Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE Haiti Earthquake Response,” 157.
46. U.S. Southern Command, “Narrative History of Operation Unified Response.”
47. Ibid.

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48. USJFCOM JCOA, “Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE Haiti Earthquake Response,” 38.
 49. U.S. Southern Command, “Narrative History of Operation Unified Response.”
 50. U.S. Southern Command Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center. “Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC) Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE,” 2
 51. Ibid., 3; OUR’s six key tasks were to conduct security operations to enable distribution of FHA/DR; develop situational understanding to speed delivery of essential relief supplies (water, food, medical); establish C2, security and logistics architecture; enable mobility for USG and other FHA/DR delivering elements; support unity of effort in delivering FHA/DR assistance to affected areas; and execute a proactive strategic communication program.
 52. USAID. “USAID DART: Ready for the Call from Haiti.”
 53. FEMA, “Haiti Earthquake Response Quick Look Report,” 7.
 54. U.S. Joint Staff, “Operation Unified Response Haiti Earthquake Situation Update,” 4.
 55. FEMA, “Haiti Earthquake Response Quick Look Report,” 7.
 56. Guha-Sapir, et al, “Haiti Earthquake Interagency Lessons Learned,” 51.
 57. Ibid.
 58. Ibid., 17 and 77.
 59. Stanley Ruff (Deputy Chief, SDDOC), interview by author, 20 September 2010.
 60. Ibid.
 61. Kate LeGates (OFDA Advisor, SOUTHCOM SCJ9), interview by author, 23 November 2010.
 62. Ibid.
 63. Norman Morissette (USTC Deployment and Distribution Operations Center), interview by author, 18 October 2010.
 64. U.S. President, Executive Order 12966.
 65. Byrnes, “U.S. Military Support to International Humanitarian Relief Operations Legal/Fiscal Limits & Constraints.”
 66. U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-29, I-2. “Unity of effort in an operation ensures all means are directed to a common purpose. During FHA operations, unity of command may not be possible, but the requirement for unity of effort becomes paramount.”
 67. U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 4-09, xv. “The purpose of support planning is to determine the sequence of the personnel, logistics, and other support required to provide supply, maintenance operations, deployment and distribution, health service support, engineering, logistic services, and operational contract support in accordance with the CONOPS [concept of operations].”
 68. Guha-Sapir, et al, “Haiti Earthquake Interagency Lessons Learned,” 48.
 69. Ibid., 51.
 70. Wilhelm, “USAID and DOD Roles in Foreign Disaster Response,” 32, and Kate LeGates (OFDA Advisor, SOUTHCOM SCJ9), interview by author, 19 October 2010.
 71. U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-29, C-11.
 72. U.S. President, Executive Order 12966.
 73. Guha-Sapir, et al, “Haiti Earthquake Interagency Lessons Learned,” 2. This was a recommendation by the workshop participants to improve the entire USG response.
 74. Kate LeGates (OFDA Advisor, SOUTHCOM SCJ9), interview by author, 19 October 2010, and U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit. “Haiti Earthquake: Breaking New Ground in the Humanitarian Information Landscape,” 3.
 75. Guha-Sapir, et al, “Haiti Earthquake Interagency Lessons Learned,” 3. This was a recommendation by the workshop participants to improve the entire USG response.

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